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THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

MISSIONS

The Testimony of Soldiers to Missions

The Layman's Missionary Movement of Great Britain recently held its first conference in Buxton with a series of enthusiastic sessions in which the most effective speakers were drawn from native Christians of Africa and India. The conference was marked also by the frank testimony of officers of both the army and the navy, who in their service abroad had been convinced by actual demonstration of the value of Christian missions. This was decidedly a new note. The prevailing sentiment of the convention was voiced by one of the speakers when he said, "It is our privilege to see that never again shall there be a generation of men who do not believe in foreign missions."

Missionary Progress in West Africa

In West Africa there are considerable additions to the Christian church, except in the old mission fields of Sierra-Leone and Gambia. On the Gold Coast the Methodists had nearly 3,000 baptisms and in Togo the German missions among the Ewe report 1,500 baptisms. The Church Missionary Society missions in Southern Nigeria are very prosperous. The C.M.S. Book-Room at Lagos has become self-supporting, and the profits made on the sales of English books and stationery have been utilized in publishing books for Christian propaganda in the Yoruba language. A native clergyman visited Palestine and Egypt last year. After his return to Lagos, the Mohammedans crowded in the church to hear news of the Holy Land. The publications of the Christian Literature Society for India have

proved very useful for work among Mohammedans in West Africa. The Sudan United Mission under the leadership of Dr. Kumm plans a chain of stations from the Niger to the Nile, and has sent out 18 new missionaries this year and hopes to begin mission work in the French Soudan where no evangelical missionary has ever worked except an agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society. On the other hand, Islam grows very rapidly and will make Christian propaganda more difficult in the future.

A New Mohammedan Sect

Islam assumes in West Africa special characteristics. It is more dependent than elsewhere on the virtue of charms; it is very often less strict in the matter of abstinence from drink. In Senegambia a new sect called the Morites has arisen. The Morites are men who give themselves to a marabout (a Mohammedan priest, if such a word can be used). They bring to him all their earnings; he treats them like his slaves. So far, there was nothing new. But now, the Morites believe that when they have become consecrated to such a saintly leader, his prayers and good deeds avail for them, so that the priest will pray for them, fast for them, deserve Allah's blessing for them, while they will work for him; it does not matter very much whether they will fulfil their duties of a Mussulman or not. It can be seen easily how this movement, while it brings ease and prosperity to some teachers of Islam who trade on their sanctity (a sanctity of a low type), destroys in fact the whole system of Islam. Sincere Moslems of Senegambia are greatly concerned with the dangers involved in the present movement.